

181 supernatural for the time to come. Nature, however, is not theirs
771 to direct; they know this all too well, and so why bother about the
789 future. Besides, there will always be something to eat, there is no
152 winter in the tropics, vegetation is luxuriant, and the Isneg are not
777 particular. Nature is ruled by the supernatural, not by human
beings. All the latter can do is to influence the supernatural. Man
has no direct control over rain and sunshine, sickness and death, but
the spirits have; and these have to be moved to pity or to be frightened
into submission, as the case may be.

753 An Isneg will say: "What is the use of medicine? If it has been
181 decreed that a person will die, he will do so, medicines or no medicines".
177 But nevertheless he will comply with all possible prescriptions
152 of the shaman, and if the person dies notwithstanding all
771 precautions have been taken to protect him from the spirits, then:
"It was his fate", and that ends the matter.

777 If the locusts are devastating the fields, an Isneg will resign himself
181 to his fate. He has worked diligently, he has observed all possible
152 omens and has broken no taboos; why should he worry, why should
he try to destroy these pests. The Government will force him to do
731 so of course, and he will obey as long as he remains under the eagle
177 eye of his rulers; but he will say: "What is the use; if we destroy
these, others will take their place, provided it be decreed that way;
and if not, it is perfectly useless to tire ourselves for nothing".

777 Such and similar states of mind are not confined to the Isneg. I
181 remember very well how on a certain occasion, in 1914, I was assisting
152 an Iloko Christian on his deathbed. Wanting to impress upon him
the great necessity of a deep sorrow for his sins, I described to him
771 as vividly as possible the horrors of hell, and told him how anxious he
177 should be to avoid an eternity of such pains and torments; but his
181 only answer was an act of absolute conformity to the Divine Will:
"If God wants me to go to hell, I am perfectly willing". And that
man was far from wanting to be disrespectful to the Deity; his words
simply illustrated how little he cared about what the future had in
store for him. Pagan Isneg lay the blame for every untoward
happening, either merely on fate, or on the intervention of some ill-
intentioned imp, while a happy turn of events is usually considered
to be the result either of fate pure and simple, or of some special
clever means by which the machinations of the spirits have been
counteracted. Nowadays the Government, the Ibanag, as they call
[72] all Christians, has generally to bear the blame of any public calamity

THE ISNEG LIFE CYCLE

149

The laziness of the Isneg man has become almost proverbial in Apayaw; he resents it of course, but what can be done about it? The Isneg are living in one of the richest provinces of the Philippines agriculturally, and nevertheless these last years, famine has desolated the land at every turn. 461
73P
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Once while at Alumani, I went to visit a few friends: three of them, the father and his two sturdy sons, the older one a widower, the younger one a bachelor, were living together in a house surrounded by the most fertile fields imaginable; and still they complained and said that they were starving to death, because there were no women to till the soil. 251
157

The year 1928 was a lean one almost all over the province, but Karagawan men preferred to squat down in their houses and feed on the flowers of the coconut tree rather than come to Kabugaw and earn a ganta (three liters) of rice a day by doing work that could easily be done by boys of twelve years of age: this work was too hard for them.

About the same time I had to go to Bayag, which is some forty miles distant from Kabugaw, a two days' walk. I sent my carriers one day ahead and gave them rations of rice for two days, in order to preclude any excuse for their not reaching their destination at least at the same time as myself. The next day I met the fellows about noon, sitting in a little hut some ten miles from home and cooking their last meal but one. Having rice they did not care for anything else. They had passed a day and a half walking ten miles, cooking rice, chewing betel nut, and . . . resting.

I could adduce a score of examples like this, all from personal experience. But after all why should we blame the Isneg for it? They were reared in years of plenty, when the smallest amount of work brought the largest possible returns; at the beginning of the lean years they consumed all the rice that had been hoarded up for years; and now the hard times have come: when a tree has been growing in a slanting direction for several years, can you make it lean to the other side in its old age? The Bontok Igorot is industrious and always ready to handle a job that may bring him some money; but he is living among rocks and cliffs, where even weeds and grasses refuse to thrive. The Isneg on the contrary are living in an exceedingly fertile country: up to recent times their district was closed to the outside world for lack of roads, and this prevented them from conducting active trade on any large scale and from selling the surplus 461
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433
487
152

855 comes for the boys to follow their father and for the girls to be left to her care. The best viands are always reserved for the little ones and dainties are stored away (*mazalimid*) for their future use. If a child gets sick, the parents will do their utmost to relieve the little sufferer; and if it is its fate, as the Isneg put it, to die, its elders' lamentations will follow it to the grave.

• 731 In times of famine the children are of course the biggest sufferers, not that the Isneg does not share with them whatever food he can lay hands on, but because growing boys and girls lack the sustenance they badly need at their age, which rarely fails to be followed by results that affect them unfavorably for the rest of their life. I have heard once of a hard-pressed Isneg who sold a child for money: this is certainly a rare exception, and, as all circumstances are not known to me (I am not even sure that it was his own child), I am not free to pronounce judgment on the transaction. What I know is that the family by whom the child was adopted would certainly not cause it to regret its former life, as far as material advantages are concerned; nevertheless this is not a sufficient excuse for such an act.

855 It may be asked if families differ much in their solicitude for the proper moral upbringing of children, if some families are more religious-minded than others, if some families are more concerned than others in watching over their children and in safeguarding them in sex morality. What can I answer to such questions? I should like to make the following invitation to my inquirers: let them choose a certain district of the United States, say in Kansas or in Indiana or in whatever state they prefer, a district where there are no densely populated sections and where some ten thousand people are scattered over a comparatively large area, and then let them tell me the result of their investigations among inhabitants of that district with reference to the above questions. I am sure that their task would not be easier or more difficult than mine, in order to give a satisfactory survey of the situation. Nevertheless I shall try to give a few concrete instances that have come to my personal notice and which I can recall just now, leaving aside the Kankanay, among whom I resided from 1909 to 1915, and confining myself exclusively to the Isneg, with whom I have been living since 1925.

855 Take the settlement of Baliwanan. A Baliwanan girl was living with the family of my catechist at Kabugaw, where she took care of the children, washed the clothes, and did other little chores. On a certain day somebody told her father that a boy had entered the house

21 of the soil that are cultivated among the Isneg. This little treatise on Isneg agriculture might have been written by a native, as I try to put myself as much as possible in the place of the Isneg.

I. ISNEG FARMING IN GENERAL

433
351 It is freely stated all over Apayaw that, in former times, rice was always abundant in each and every village. Not to have old rice (*kópag*) in store, meaning "rice that had been reaped one or more years previously",¹ was the exception rather than the rule; and there were always in existence a goodly number of granaries where rice was kept that had been harvested up to four years back.

● 731 A famine (*dasmág* or *uldt*), under the circumstances, might be called
433 an unknown entity, were it not that *dasmág* and *uldt* are genuine Isneg terms, and so that the thing they refer to must have made its appearance at least occasionally. Actually, however, every few years one hears about a famine devastating the land and bringing in its
[146] wake a tremendous amount of distress and misery. The children, of course, are usually the most to be pitied, as they are liable to be permanently affected by the lack of sufficient nourishment.

433 It might be objected that Apayaw is a rich agricultural country,
731 that it is covered with vegetation throughout the year, that rice is
151 not the only crop that can be raised with advantage, that there is an abundance of tropical forests containing plenty of trees and plants of which one or more parts are edible, and consequently that starvation must be impossible. To this I must answer that the cause is not to be found in the soil or in the climatic conditions of the country, but in the character of its inhabitants. The Isneg is easily dejected, he cannot stand adversity; if his ordinary means of sustenance fail, he is at a loss what to do, he just sits down and moons. Even when remunerative work is offered to him, an Isneg who has not the usual amount of rice at his disposal has rarely the courage to perform it: he is simply down.

Fortunately the average Isneg woman shows herself much more courageous, and, where her husband proves a dismal failure, she it

¹ Rice that has been kept for one or two years, because its owners, being in mourning for a dead child, abstained from eating it, is called *dismág*. In native words occurring in the present paper the accent (') is placed over the accented vowel. Accented *n* (*ñ*) denotes the *ng* sound in English "bring". For full phonetic key, see M. Vanoverbergh. The Isneg, Publ. Cath. Anthropol. Conf., 1932, v. 3, no. 1, pp. 3-4.

THE INEG FARMER

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is who finds a means to keep the wolf from the door. On occasions like these, it is clearly apparent how training and experience have rendered the Ineg girl fit for meeting almost any kind of emergency, while the customary indolence of the male makes him an easy prey to downheartedness, so much so that he becomes utterly unable to save himself and his family from the pangs of hunger. 433 731 157

If we come to consider the situation from the point of view of the Ineg, it is not to be wondered at that nowadays famines are of rather frequent occurrence in Apayaw. Indeed, foreign authorities have invaded the land: not understanding the position of the Ineg with reference to the tutelary spirits of the country, they have all but extirpated headhunting. What can be expected after this? Being denied their usual offerings, the spirits stop protecting the crops. It is true that the Ineg does not cease to propitiate them by all possible means, but the great sacrifice has been rendered almost impossible, and so the fields have become a prey to evil imps, while the protectors of the rice, the purveyors of the Ineg, have become either powerless or indifferent. 433 731 771 721 782 241

Nevertheless, under ordinary circumstances, the average Ineg raises enough rice to last him and his family for a year. He may not be able to store it up for future consumption, but what he has usually keeps him alive from one harvest to the next, and besides almost always allows him to offer an occasional sacrifice to the spirits and to invite his relatives and neighbors to the ceremony. Such is the normal state of affairs with the great majority of the people. 433 782

Now in almost every agglomeration one will find at least one man who is styled "rich" (*ba-nán*), a man who raises rice in abundance (*aragamdy*) and consequently is able to offer one or more solemn sacrifices every year and to provide food to the inhabitants of several villages for days at a time. However, these so-called rich people do not fare any better than the average citizen, as their surplus is easily consumed at their *sáy-ám* or solemn sacrifices.

On the other hand, there are always a few who may be called poor (*nakimrút*): their rice, if they raise any at all, never lasts them the whole year round, and, in the meanwhile, they have to content themselves with Indian corn, yams, taro and the rest; but only in times of famine, are they obliged to feed on coconut flowers and other outlandish foods. Others again seem never to be able to make both ends meet: these are the *sibud*; their rice, which should be sufficient for ordinary persons, is usually gone almost before they are aware of it, 433 731 262 735

THE ISNEG FARMER

291

When you have to start a certain work and want it finished quickly, 824
go and look for a little herb, called *tagalárat* in Bayag: it is about 789
five or six inches tall, has comparatively long leaves, and grows almost
anywhere. After you have found it, take it along and put it down
somewhere near the place where you begin working: in less than no
time you will be through with everything.

In order to assure the healthy growth of any kind of plant, before
you start sowing or planting, stick some part of a *litár* in the ground
somewhere at the place where you begin. The stem and the leaves
of the *litár*, which is a climbing plant, are both of the same color:
they are uniformly green.

When your plants have taken root (*naggamút*), or, which amounts
to the same, if they live (*mabiyág*), it is the farmer's duty to see that
they become strong. The surest way to obtain such a result is to go
and look for a herb, called *tagabilag* at Bayag, and to attach it to one
of the plants in question. It causes the whole field or garden to be
covered with the most luxuriant vegetation and to produce a growth
that can weather almost any storm. The *tagabilag* may be found all
over the district: it is rather tall, some ten inches, and bears white
flowers and red fruits.

Another herb, called *gútud* at Bayag, of the same habitat as the
preceding, but rather low, may be used with profit in connection with
the gathering of crops. It should be tied to one of the plants that
have to be reaped, and if nothing untoward intervenes, the farmer may
rest assured that his soil will yield a most bountiful harvest.

To avoid the occurrence of landslides, which often play havoc not 731
only with plantations, but with dwellings and granaries as well, the 824
Isneg plant *nagbáyigān* on or near the spot they want to protect 789
one single plant is sufficient, and it is not necessary to have it multiply.
The *nagbáyigān* is a stout herb, usually some two feet tall: it spreads
a very agreeable odor, has comparatively long leaves, and, according
to the natives, bears no flowers.

But the enemies of a man's fields and gardens are numerous and 841
powerful: some of them are able to destroy in less than one hour
what it has taken you weeks and months to build up. Therefore all
Isneg farmers should know who they are and make a thorough study
of all the means at their disposal for combating them and protecting
the fruit of their labor. The dangers that threaten the life or growth
of any particular kind of plant will be treated in their proper place.

One of the greatest enemies of the Isneg farmer is the locust (*dódon*), and consequently it will not seem strange that he is usually well acquainted with the names of several varieties of rice that can withstand these pests most effectually. We have, among others:

The *paturdy*, without awns (*ibo*);

The *ortó*-, also awnless, and with rather small kernels: it is said by the Isneg to remain on the field even though all other varieties be consumed by locusts;

The *kuritdy*, which has very tough leaves, no awns, and thin elongated kernels: it is comparatively rare and often used for purposes of divination. Knead a ball of cooked *kuritdy*-rice and throw it a certain distance: if it falls down in a compact mass, you are sure to live long; should it break up or be smashed to pieces, the span of your life will be a short one.

In the same line may be mentioned the *binoóxan*, which is supposed to be immune from the depredations of wild animals.

Then we have the *madiliya* (evidently from the Spanish *medalla*, "medal", which may be the reason why it is used for an amulet, as will be seen under the description of the preparation of seeds for planting), a kind of *dékat*-or oily rice. The sweets made from this variety remain soft for a considerable time, even to the third and fourth "night", as the Isneg puts it, who counts by nights, not by days.

The tallest and largest variety of rice is called *táyútáy*: its husk is very light-colored.

The *xirzirá*- is the despair of the housewife, as it is exceedingly hard to pound: its husk is variegated and it has no awns.

It sometimes happens that the Isneg plants several varieties of rice or palay¹⁸ in one and the same field; but, if he does so, he is always careful to keep each variety to its own patch of ground and not to plant them indiscriminately all over the field. In this case, each variety is known by the name of *xánan*. Thus, when the Isneg says that he has three *xánan* in his field, he means that his field is divided into three sections, each of them planted with a different variety of palay. It should be noted though that the name *xánan* is applied to the rice that grows there and not to the patch of soil in which it is planted.

¹⁸ A name which is used extensively all over the Islands and means "rice in the husk or paddy".

243 Then accompany her when she goes to place it in your field: the next
789 time that deer comes again, it will die inside your *kómān*.

The *sakórān* is a section of a bamboo stem that has been split at the top into many narrow strips, which in turn have been spread open so as to take the shape of a funnel. A *sakórān* is very often stuck upright in the center of a rice field in order to frighten away wild boars and deer. It is even more effective if you furnish it with an herb, some twelve inches tall, also called *sakórān*, and growing in forested areas.

• 131 The worst enemy of your field, however, is the locust (*dódon*; young
789 locust: *annón*), and this subject needs a more extensive treatment.

218 Swarms of locusts have infested the district, every four or five years, ever since the occupation of Apayaw in 1913, and whenever they pass at the time of the year when rice fields are clothed in green, which is usually the time when they do, it means famine for the country. These pests clip the paddy (*ratudán*) as nicely as a lawn mower, so that nothing remains but the *ratúd* (what remains after the grass has been cut close to the ground), and the field is *naratudán*. What has been left untouched is called the *ínáb* of the locust.

Everybody knows that prevention is better than cure, and so, in order to save your field from the alighting of the locusts, whose presence has been ascertained in the district, make immediate use of one or both of the following amulets: the *anódon*, a creeping herb found in almost any place, which, when placed in the *kómān*, prevents it from alluring the locusts; leafy branches of the *alsít*, a hesperidious shrub bearing small bitter fruits, not larger than a fingerlet, and growing in forests: when stuck in the soil of your field, they keep the locusts at a distance.

In case they are already very near, you may have recourse to either or both of the following expedients:

Place some *tagága* (Bayag pronunciation) in your field to prevent them from alighting. The *tagága* is an asclepiadaceous vine, clinging to trees, and much used for decorating purposes: its opposite leaves growing close together on both sides of the stem give it the appearance of a thick ribbon, deeply indented all along its edges.

Go and put *takkír álig*²⁵ in the place where the locusts are for the moment, so that they fly away out of your own neighborhood. The *takkír álig* is a low herb that grows in forests.

²⁵ Literally: with which the *álig* drives away its companions. The *álig*-bee is supposed to keep ants at a distance.

Should they come along anyhow, either through negligence on your part, or because you have been taken unawares, as soon as they start alighting in your field, take a *balanddn*-blanket,²⁴³ the ~~the~~ ⁷³¹ ~~at~~ ⁷⁸⁹ one of its corners in the end of a long pole, which you have split for the purpose, and erect this improvised flag somewhere in your *kóman*. The higher the pole the easier it will be to frighten the locusts away. If there is no pole at hand, tie the blanket to the top of one of the trees that have been left standing, provided it be a tall one. This stratagem is called *magdattág*.

Once the locusts have taken possession of your rice field, the only way to drive them off is to throw *aksumtq* (Bayag pronunciation) among them: this is a low herb with small hairy leaves that grows all over the district.

Here in Apayaw the Isneg do not live close enough together to be able to imitate the inhabitants of other parts of the Mountain Province, where large groups of people, equipped with small nets, go to attack the enemy. But, after all, these expeditions are rarely very effective, and usually the only result, perhaps the most important in the eyes of the improvident natives, is the catching of a large amount of viands without any cost and with comparatively little trouble. The Isneg also considers a locust as a dainty and may for a few days look with dry eyes on the disaster that has been wrought in his beloved *kóman*, only to expiate later on by a prolonged fast the few happy hours of satiated gourmandizing.

But let us revert to our rice fields, and see how the Isneg tackles the problem of defending them against the jealousy of his neighbors, who either use natural means to destroy the paddy, which they rarely dare to attempt, or resort to occult powers to play havoc in a *kóman*, which is of much more frequent occurrence.

If you mix the barks of the *pannó*, a forest tree, and of the *karrán*, a leafless plant, some twelve inches tall, growing in forests (the name means "scaring away"), and place this mixture in your field, the person who ventures to harm your crops, will die instantly and without any previous illness, as soon as he gets home.

If, instead of the barks, you use *annopá*, a low herb growing in forests, the villain will be killed in an accident.

Now it may happen that you think about it only after some harm has been done already. In such a case insert a *binusíran*, a kind of

²⁴³ Indigo, ornamented with purple thread at the seams.